

# Barndale House School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122384
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	380461
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 July 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Ann Muxworthy

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in the sixth form</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	30
<b>Of which number on roll in the sixth form</b>	9
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Nicholls
<b>Headteacher</b>	Colin Bradshaw
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 December 2008
<b>School address</b>	Howling Lane Alnwick NE66 1DQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01665 602541
<b>Fax number</b>	01665 606 370

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<b>Residential provision</b>	Barndale House School
<b>Social care unique reference number</b>	SC041487
<b>Social care inspector</b>	Robert Curr

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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Ann Muxworthy  
Robert Curr

Additional Inspector  
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed teaching and learning in five lessons taught by five different teachers, and also carried out a 'learning walk' across five lessons. Pupils were seen arriving at school, at play and using the residential provision. Discussions were held with staff, members of the governing body, pupils and health professionals working in the school. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at policies, minutes of the governing body meetings, the school's self-evaluation, external reports and records of pupils' progress. They analysed the 15 questionnaires returned by parent and carers and questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

Barndale House School is a smaller than average size special school with residential provision. The school caters for pupils with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties. There is an increasing number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorder and some pupils have additional sensory, physical disabilities, medical needs or present challenging behaviours. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Pupils attend mainly from north Northumberland. Most pupils are White British and a high proportion is known to be eligible for free school meals. There is a very small percentage that speaks English as an additional language. The school has the Eco-Schools award and has attained Healthy School status. The school is in two buildings on one site with one building mainly used as the residential provision for the school. The headteacher took up his post in January 2011.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate**  
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. It has improved well in the last three years but is not outstanding because pupils are not making the same progress in writing as they are in other subjects and assessment is sometimes inconsistent.
- Pupils' achievement across the school is good. They make good progress and have achieved well by the time they leave the sixth form. Pupils build on their prior learning well and benefit from good-quality teaching matched to individual needs. However, because there are too few opportunities within the curriculum for pupils to apply their writing skills, their progress in this subject is not as strong as in reading, mathematics and science.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils of all abilities have a good understanding of keeping themselves safe and learn to manage their own behaviour through the diligent modelling of care and respect from staff. They have positive attitudes to learning.
- Teaching is good and learning opportunities are of good quality. The inspiring resources used and the high quality of relationships underpin the enjoyment and interest pupils have in their lessons. Pupils achieve well because teachers and teaching assistants have a secure knowledge and understanding of their individual needs. However, although assessment is used well for gathering evidence of what pupils have achieved, it is not, in all lessons, providing pupils with comments on what they need to do for their next steps in learning.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, leadership team and the governing body, share high expectations for their pupils. This common sense of purpose is supporting improvements in teaching through the use of new curriculum materials and assessment tools introduced to further support pupils' achievement. There is a good commitment to staff development and sharing practice within and beyond school. Self-evaluation is good because the school continually evaluates practice, sets new priorities and seeks external moderation.
- The overall effectiveness of residential provision is good.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensuring that assessment of learning is consistent across the school and captures small steps of progress for all learners, particularly in written feedback and gives next steps in learning.
- Ensure that there are more opportunities for writing across the curriculum in order to raise pupils' overall achievement even further.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

The large majority of parents and carers feel that their children are making good progress. One parent commented, 'I can't express how much the school has done for my son. He has developed beyond what we thought possible – all done with care.' The inspection findings agree that pupils are making good progress. In lessons, pupils make consistently good progress when measured against their individual starting points, which are low in relation to age-related expectations. Pupils show a good level of engagement in their lessons because they enjoy their learning and respond well to challenges. The school's high expectations ensure that the more-able pupils meet their challenging targets. Those with less complex needs gain success in entry level Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) awards. Those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress when compared to similar pupils nationally.

Pupils make good progress in reading throughout the school, although by the time they leave, their attainment is below that found nationally. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language succeed in equal measure to all other pupils and clearly gain from a learning environment that is supported by staff trained in Makaton. Pupils' targets and assessment information are used successfully to provide individually-focused support with the result that pupils with communication difficulties make good progress in developing their skills in speaking and listening. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress as do those students leaving the sixth form.

### Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good and secures pupils' good learning and progress. The majority of parents and carers returning the questionnaires agree. The excellent relationships with teaching staff motivate pupils to learn. Support staff are integral to pupils' learning and intervene appropriately. In good lessons, teachers apply their specialist knowledge and skills well and provide high-quality resources to inspire and challenge pupils to achieve their best. Skilled questioning promotes pupils' understanding of what is being taught and what they have remembered. However, in some lessons the marking of pupils' work is less well-developed in providing feedback to pupils for their next steps in learning.

The curriculum is good. The extensive extra-curricular activities and caring ethos contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The stimulating project on

Eugemot Orphanage in Africa exemplifies how the pupils can engage with lifestyles in other cultures. The school provides excellent opportunities to promote independent learning ensuring that all pupils develop the personal skills they need for the future. The strong emphasis on the basic skills of communication, reading, writing and mathematics contributes well to pupils' good achievement. Numeracy and reading across the curriculum are strengths. However, more opportunities for writing are rightly identified by the school as an area for further development. Constant quality interactions and visual prompts assist in the development of language and communication skills and understanding in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In the sixth form, students are supported well when they transfer to colleges and access work-related learning and employability courses. A dedicated health and therapy team support pupils' physical well-being, medical and communication needs extremely well.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Most parents and carers who returned the questionnaire strongly agree with inspection findings that typically there is a good standard of behaviour in school and that the school deals with any cases of bullying effectively. The more-able pupils understand the different kinds of bullying. The school has an exceedingly positive learning environment that supports respect and thoughtfulness. Pupils say they feel safe. One parent commented typically that, 'We find all aspects of Barndale fantastic and all staff supportive and helpful.' Pupils enjoy lessons and get involved enthusiastically in many other activities which develop confidence, independence and social skills. This is seen in their participation at the Glendale Area Sports Day and representing the school at Alnwick Castle for the Olympic Torch event. Attendance is above average.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher has high expectations for pupils' achievements and is focused on driving through and securing nothing less than excellence for pupils. This is shared with all those with leadership responsibility. Self-evaluation is accurate and used well to improve school performance. This is seen in the most recent evaluation of the curriculum where the Equals Schemes of Work were introduced to provide more personalised learning. Systems to evaluate the quality of teaching and to track pupils' progress are effective in identifying priorities for raising achievement.

The curriculum is good and enriched. It supports good achievement. However, in the school's most recent analysis of data, writing was identified as weaker than other subjects and in need of further application across different subjects. Staff are highly skilled in supporting the communication needs of the pupils and the school has invested heavily in staff and resources to aid communication. There is a symbiotic partnership with health professionals in the school who provide excellent care for the pupils. There are effective partnerships to prepare pupils for their next educational or work experience placement, such as Ashington College.

The governing body has a good understanding of the school's priorities and is immensely supportive of the future vision for the school. There is a good range of expertise and skills and it fulfils its duties well in holding the school to account. There is high commitment to safety, including ensuring that current safeguarding requirements are met. They have embraced the school's recent investment in PIVATs as a data analysis tool to inform pupils' achievement and target-setting. The governing body shares the staff's view that pupils

should have good opportunities to socialise and work with pupils in other schools and see this as vital in ensuring that pupils have a good understanding of their community and essential in the promotion of equality of opportunity. The engaging school assemblies and visits to the People's Kitchen are valuable experiences that support their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The leadership and management of the residential provision are good. Leaders are committed to providing high-quality provision and have created a supportive, caring ethos that contributes significantly to pupils' good outcomes.

Parents and carers are appreciative of the work of the school and make comments such as, 'A totally first class school. Brilliant headteacher and excellent staff'. The school has made good improvements since the previous inspection and, therefore, has good capacity to sustain this improvement.

## **Residential provision**

Outcomes for residential pupils are good. Residential pupils thoroughly enjoy their residential experience and feel safe and relaxed in the residential community. It is clear that they encourage and support one other and there are excellent relationships with the residential care staff.

Residential pupils make outstanding progress socially in terms of their self-esteem and confidence. Individual achievements are celebrated and pupils are supported to develop new interests and skills. A wide range of activities is on offer including ten-pin bowling, theatre trips and swimming. A number of activities takes place in the local community, for example, some pupils are members of a local youth club.

There are good opportunities for all residential pupils to develop independence in skills such as changing their beds, cooking and developing road safety to help them to achieve their full potential. There is not sufficient detail in care plans to ensure that these activities are well-organised for the benefit of pupils.

Residential pupils receive high levels of support from a range of staff at the school and there are strong, effective links with all areas within the school, including the education and health care teams. The multi-professional approach to meeting each young person's specific health and welfare needs is embedded within the ethos of the school. The care staff communicate well with the pupils and this is facilitated by all the care staff having regular training around pupils' communication needs.

Residential pupils' health needs are promoted to a particularly high standard. All medication is safely administered and residential pupils are provided with a wide range of guidance regarding health and social issues. For example, the occupational therapist and nurses are on hand in the setting to advise and support care staff with a wide range of health care matters.

All the residential areas are in a good state of decoration and are well-maintained. The food provided is of the highest quality and is much appreciated by pupils. The catering team makes certain that meticulous care is taken to ensure that individual diets are well

catered for and residential pupils are able to influence the menus. Breakfast and evening mealtimes are well-ordered and sociable, with staff sitting and eating with pupils and supporting them in a sensitive, unobtrusive manner.

A hierarchy of behavioural techniques is used, which take into account the residential pupils' age, understanding and the seriousness of the situation at any given point. This support enables residential pupils to cope with their emotions. Where care staff need to give additional help, their use of diversion, re-direction and de-escalation is highly effective. This avoids behaviour escalating to a level where residential pupils become distressed and place themselves and others at risk of harm. Because of this highly-effective approach, the use of restraint in the school is very rare. However, the records of some incidents are not sufficiently detailed. The records indicate that physical interventions may have been used when this is not the case.

Safe recruitment practice is in place to ensure that the recruitment and selection of new care staff remains thorough. Not all key staff that are involved in the recruitment process have undertaken training in relation to safer recruitment.

A wide range of policies and procedures is held by the school. A number of policies is in the process of being reviewed in line with the new National Minimum Standards. Contact details for Ofsted are inconsistent throughout some of the documents, including the pupils' guide to the residential provision. This does not give clear guidance for people who might want to make contact.

## National minimum standards

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

### Areas for improvement

- Contribute further to the development of independence for pupils who are planning to leave the school, in particular, work collaboratively with pupils and key workers in implementing a plan. (NMS 2)
- Ensure that incident reports are in sufficient detail to describe the physical contact made with pupils. (NMS 12)
- Ensure that all key staff involved in the recruitment and selection process receive appropriate training. (NMS 14)
- Continue to audit and review the policies and procedures in line with the current National Minimum Standards, in particular include the correct contact details for Ofsted. (NMS 1)

*These are the grades for the residential provision*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the residential experience</b>	2
Outcomes for residential pupils	2
Quality of residential provision and care	2
Residential pupils' safety	2
Leadership and management of the residential provision	2



## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add up exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



6 July 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Barndale House School, Alnwick, NE66 1DQ**

Thank you so much for being so kind and helpful when we inspected your school. We greatly enjoyed meeting you and thoroughly enjoyed seeing your lessons and other activities. Watching you learn about numbers while playing ten-pin bowling and looking at the Olympic torches you made knowing they were cone-shaped, told us so much about the very interesting things you get to do. You also got to win medals at Glendale Sports day.

We found that Barndale House is a good school. This is because your headteacher, staff and governors work hard to make sure your school is the best it can be. You make good progress and become confident young people; you are right to care for and be proud of your school. We also found out that your school takes good care of you and you have good residential provision. You are safe and your behaviour with your friends and in school shows how you all get on really well together.

We enjoyed the lessons we saw, especially where the teachers let you show your speaking and listening skills. We have asked your teachers to think of interesting ways for you to practise and apply your writing skills more. You are learning so many different things and we want your teachers to let you know what you have learnt and then tell you what you can try next.

My very best wishes for your future

Yours sincerely,

Ann Muxworthy  
Lead Inspector

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